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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 7, 2020

Former Angels Employee Charged in Pitcher's Fatal Fentanyl Overdose

An ex-employee of the Los Angeles Angels has been charged with conspiracy to distribute fentanyl in connection with the 2019 overdose death of Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs, announced U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas Erin Nealy Cox.

Former Angels Communications Director Eric Prescott Kay, 45, was charged via criminal complaint with conspiracy to distribute a mixture containing detectable amounts of fentanyl. He was arrested in Fort Worth, Texas and made his initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeffrey L. Cureton at the Mahon Federal Courthouse Friday morning.

U.S. Attorney Erin Nealy Cox and DEA Special Agent in Charge Eduardo A. Chávez of the Dallas Field Division made the announcement in a video posted online this morning: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nc9E_Tyy1u0.

According to the criminal complaint, filed on July 30 and unsealed Friday, the investigation began on July 1, 2019, when the Southlake Police Department received a 911 call stating that Mr. Skaggs, then just 27 years old, had been found dead in his hotel room at the Southlake Town Square Hilton. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office later determined that Mr. Skaggs had a mixture of ethanol, fentanyl, and oxycodone in his system at the time of his death; it was later ascertained that but for the fentanyl, Mr. Skaggs would not have died.

Inside Mr. Skaggs's hotel room, investigators discovered a number of pills, including a single blue pill with the markings M/30. An analysis of the pill – which closely resembled a 30-milligram oxycodone tablet – revealed it had been laced with fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opiate.

In an initial interview with law enforcement, Mr. Kay allegedly denied knowing whether Mr. Skaggs was a drug user. He claimed the last time he'd seen Mr. Skaggs was at hotel check-in on June 30. However, a search of Mr. Skaggs's phone revealed text messages from June 30 suggesting that he had asked Mr. Kay to stop by his room with pills late that evening.

Hotel key card records indicated that Mr. Kay's room, no. 367, was opened at 11:29 p.m., and Mr. Skaggs's room, no. 469, was opened nine minutes later, at 11:38 p.m.

Investigators later learned that, contrary to what he'd told law enforcement the day Mr. Skaggs's body was discovered, Mr. Kay had allegedly admitted to a colleague that he had, in fact, visited Mr. Skaggs's room the night of his death.

In the course of their investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration determined that Mr. Kay allegedly regularly dealt the blue M/30 pills – dubbed “blue boys” – to Mr. Skaggs and to others, doling out the pills at the stadium where they worked.

“Tyler Skaggs's overdose – coming, as it did, in the midst of an ascendant baseball career – should be a wakeup call: No one is immune from this deadly drug, whether sold as a powder or hidden inside an innocuous-looking tablet,” U.S. Attorney Nealy Cox said. “Suppressing the spread of fentanyl is a priority for the Department of Justice.”

“Fentanyl does not discriminate in its potential deadly consequences,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Eduardo A. Chávez. “With the prevalence of fentanyl in many of the counterfeit prescription drugs sold on the streets, every pill taken could be your last. The Dallas DEA mourns not only with the Skaggs family, but with all families who have endured loved ones taken too soon due to a drug overdose. As with Mr. Kay's arrest, we will continue to identify and investigate those who distribute these drugs to ensure they face justice.”

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation of wrongdoing, not evidence. Like all defendants, Mr. Kay is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in federal prison.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's Dallas Field Division and the Southlake Police Department conducted the investigation with the assistance of the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lindsey Beran and Errin Martin are prosecuting the case.

Attachment(s):

[Download kaycomplaint.pdf](#)

Topic(s):

Prescription Drugs

Comment(s):

Component(s):

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

USAO - Texas, Northern

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Updated August 7, 2020